



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## AMULETS AND BOWLS WITH MAGIC INSCRIPTIONS

AN important American publication, containing numerous magic inscriptions in Aramaic, and my recent academic study at Paris concerning a French acquisition of the same nature, present occasion for a critical review of this subject. We must follow up its development, inquire into the progress made in this branch of Semitic studies, in order to complete or at least to increase the vocabulary which relates thereto. Up to the present time we have had merely unconnected accounts. The rudiments of this field have scarcely been cultivated in our own time. The first discoveries do not date back more than seventy-five years. England first had the good fortune about 1846 to make fruitful excavations near Tell-Amran in the vicinity of Hillah, the most remote part of Mesopotamia, Suziana, on the same site that the Jews are thought to have occupied in Babylon during the Captivity.

Aside from the objects that are connected with the era of the successive domination of the Arsacids, the Sassanids, and the Arabs, there have also been found little monuments in Hebrew of the Middle Ages, the date of which varies between the fifth and the seventh or eighth century of the common era. Among these objects we find pottery of baked clay which reveals an interesting side in the history of the Jewish colonies that settled upon the ruins of this land, after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans. In this pottery there are bowls which partake of the form of very wide, hemispherical calottes, with a diameter in the middle varying from eight to twelve centimetres. The material composing it is of reddish clay with sides as thick (or deep) as a household

dish, rather coarsely shaped at its circumference so that it does not show any artistic interest.

The interior concave surface of these bowls contains magic inscriptions traced by ink in a circle, most often spirally, beginning now in the centre, or at the umbilical (*δμφαλός*) protuberance so as to end in the periphery; now in the opposite direction, from the periphery to the centre. Rather rarely we find inscriptions composed of concentric lines, inclosing a rough sketch of a human image representing a male or female demon. These lines constitute incantations, or objurgations, uttered by the exorcists in order to put to flight the demons that were supposed to torment the sick. It was thus a matter of avoiding misfortune, or of curing the patient who would drink of the liquid that was poured into the bowl as he besought the intercession of Providence, or of the liberating angels. Although all these texts vary in form, yet in essence they resemble each other closely. Thus we have preserved traces of magic rites among people who especially ought to have banished them, inasmuch as these deeds of popular superstition are irreligious.

The pagans attributed the steadfastness of the early Christians in enduring martyrdom to the employment of secret and diabolical methods, accusing them of performing certain charms through the recitation of Biblical verses to avoid the effects of torture. An instance of this is the passage in Exod. 12. 46, 'Ye shall break no bone thereof', and the preservative power of this verse is recalled by John the Evangelist (19. 36)<sup>1</sup> in the final story of the Passion of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> These same superstitions are reflected in other passages of the Old and New Testament (Isa. 41. 17; Jer. 25. 15-27; Matt. 20 and 26). In reference to hydromancy there is an allusion in the Babylonian Talmud,<sup>3</sup> and the Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Num. 9. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Ed. Le Blant, 'L'accusation de magie dirigée contre les premiers Chrétiens', in the *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France*, CXXXI; 'Actes des martyrs', in the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, vol. XXX, part 2, p. 105 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Shabbat 37 b; Yoma 84 a; Beṣah 16 a; Baba meṣia 29 b; Abodah Zarah 38 a.

Talmud<sup>4</sup> narrates how a sorcerer became inaccessible to rain-water. We have similar references in the Midrash.<sup>5</sup>

By a kind of logical sequel, the language in which these formulas of incantation were conceived is generally that of the Chaldean Targums. The Hebrew square type is most frequently the character of the writing, with forms more or less removed from the actual writing, according to the antiquity of the monument which can be precisely determined by the characters of the writing, while the forms of the letters help to fix approximately the dates of the texts. The formulas, however, are written now in Mandaic, now in Syriac, both cursive and estrangelo, and again in Arabic.

From the afore-mentioned English excavations the British Museum has received twenty-four Judæo-Babylonian vases with magic oburgations. A masterly description from an archaeological point of view was made by Layard in his 'Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon' (London, 1832, pp. 509-26); but the decipherment and interpretation of the texts, undertaken in part by Thomas Ellis, and in part by Zenker, left much to be accomplished. It required the labours of such competent Orientalists as M. A. Levy,<sup>6</sup> the brilliant epigraphist of Phœnicia, Th. Nöldeke,<sup>7</sup> D. Chwolson,<sup>8</sup> who was assisted by Joseph Halévy, to perfect the interpretation of these texts. Halévy, indeed, expounded<sup>9</sup> the most illegible text before the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, in 1877. It is found in No. 20 of Chwolson's *Corpus*.

<sup>4</sup> Hagigah II, § 2, and parallel passage in Sanhedrin 45 b; cf. Jos. Derenbourg, *Histoire de la Palestine*, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Raba on Genesis, § 92 (f. 80 b); Midrash on Prov. i. 14; Tanhuma on Gen. 42, or § v, f. 20 a; Yalkuṭ, first part, § 15 (f. 47 b).

<sup>6</sup> *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. IX (1845), p. 465 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. XXXIV (1870), p. 90 ff.

<sup>8</sup> *Corpus Inscriptionum Hebraicarum*, St. Petersburg, 1882, pp. 103-20.

<sup>9</sup> *Comptes-rendus des Séances de l'Académie*, fourth series, vol. V. See his *Mélanges de Critique et d'Histoire*, pp. 229 ff.

These pioneers, through their invaluable labours, have served as guides in the researches subsequently undertaken in this field. We likewise have attempted to read and translate somewhat similar texts which were brought to France from 1882 to 1915. There are now a dozen collections, divided between the Musée du Louvre, the alcove for medals and antiquities of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and those contained in the recent acquisition of Pozzi,<sup>10</sup> Professor of Surgery. These translations have been published in series partly in England,<sup>11</sup> partly in France.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, the University of Pennsylvania has had excavations made in Babylon and in Nippur, the ancient remains of Chaldea. The excavations under the supervision of Professor Peters, during the first two archaeological expeditions in 1888 and 1889, brought to light more than 150 specimens of the type under discussion, consisting of fragments of bowls found one or two metres from the ground. A selection of forty complete texts was made from these, upon which Mr. James A. Montgomery, a learned professor at the Philadelphia Divinity School, and Assistant-Professor at the aforementioned University, has published a book entitled *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur*.<sup>13</sup> It is contained in the Publications of the Babylonian Section, vol. iii, which the Museum of the University printed from a fund endowed by Eckley Brinton Coxe, jun. In consequence of this

<sup>10</sup> Lectures held at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Aug. 3, 1883; Sept. 25, 1885; March 20 and June 19, 1891; Oct. 29, 1915; *Comptes rendus des Séances*, 1883, p. 268; 1885, p. 232; 1891, pp. 122, 189; 1915, pp. 383-9.

<sup>11</sup> 'Les coupes magiques et l'hydromancie dans l'antiquité orientale', in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, April 1890, vol. XII, pp. 292-343; June 1891, vol. XIII, pp. 583-96. Cf. *Rapport sur les inscriptions hébraïques de la France*, 1904, pp. 22-6.

<sup>12</sup> One in the *Revue des Études Juives*, vol. IV (1882), pp. 165 ff.; two in the *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale*, I (1885), 117-19; II (1891), 138-41; others in this same *Revue*, III, 49-51; finally an article by Professor Hyvernat in the *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung*, II (1885), pp. 113-46.

<sup>13</sup> Philadelphia, *University Museum*, 1913 (326 pages and 41 plates).

publication the Orientalists can now find information, which formerly was scattered here and there, under one head. Mr. Montgomery has taken care to indicate the references in Chapter I of his introduction, due to his appreciation of the usefulness of bibliographical details, so that the investigators will be thankful to find the facts gathered in a praiseworthy collection. Here we have numerous facsimile forms of inscriptions duly catalogued (pp. 319-26), with all their varieties of writing, but in square character instead of being arranged spirally as we find in the original. It was a good idea on the part of the author to have photographed the interior inscription of one of these bowls from opposite points, partly covered by shade as represented by plate XLI.

We should be no less grateful to the author for his collection, through indexes and glossaries, of the as yet occasionally obscure elements of this mystic language, purposely concealed from the view of the profane. Under this mask there are hidden the proper names of men or women as protection against the malefices of Satan, or the names of the divinity invoked for the same purpose, or qualifications of good or evil spirits, in other words, of angels and demons. As modern science would put it: the injurious microbes counterbalanced by the useful and vivifying microbes.

It may be questioned whether the glossary C in Montgomery's volume, arranged according to roots, does not confuse the reader somewhat. Would it not have been better to combine this glossary with the two preceding, considering that there is a general index of the Indo-European words? We regret indeed the omission of the only monument of this type that is known in Russia, deposited in the museum of Moscow, of which Dr. Albert Harkavy has been making a detailed study in the *Zapiski Vostochnago Otdeleniya Archeologii. Obichestva* (Memoirs of the Society of Archaeology, Oriental Section, St. Petersburg, 1889, vol. iv, pp. 83-95). Why has the name of the venerable Russian librarian become B. Markaug, a deformation which has misguided research? As a result of this omission, the glossary which in our opinion is the principal part of the American collection, is divested

of the terms employed in the text (in twelve lines) of Moscow. This is one of the exceptional criticisms to be presented against the publication' of the Aramaic texts, wherein the learned editor has set forth an abundance of material in a manner betokening eminent philological knowledge.

In 1905 R. P. Ronzevalle, Professor at the French University of Syria, sent us from Beyrout two photographs (face and reverse) of a silver lamella discovered in a tomb in the vicinity of Aleppo, which contains more than thirty-seven lines of Hebrew writing. This extremely rare fragment dates from the fifth or possibly the fourth century of the common era. By its wording as well as by its contents of magic incantation it occupies a place of prime importance by the side of our bowls of baked clay.

The material drawn from these diverse, scattered studies may be increased by the following list of new Chaldean words that have not as yet appeared in the usual vocabularies. The present list of words is based—aside from some references (forgotten by M.) to our own lists in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1890-91, there designed by F, L, M, O, P, Q, R—on four other sources which up to the present time have not been excerpted in vocabularies. I use the following abbreviations: (1) Hark. refers to the afore-mentioned Russian article written by Dr. Albert Harkavy in 1889; (2) the name Lacan directs us to the investigator of one of the bowls owned by M. Feuardent;<sup>14</sup> (3) the abridgment Ronz. refers to the amulet-text of R. P. Ronzevalle, which we published with a translation and commentary in the *Journal Asiatique* (1906, vol. i, pp. 5-17); (4) the word Pozzi is used with reference to the bowl in the collection of antiquities of the surgeon professor, a study of which was presented by us at the session of the Académie des Inscriptions, the 29th of October 1915.

Additions to the Glossaries of Mystical Words:—

אבלות, the pale one (the moon): Ronz., line 25.

אדילסיר or באדילסיר, a proper name: Schwab P.

<sup>14</sup> *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale*, III, 49-51.

אונרית (from the root אנר to engage), female demon: Ronz., line 24.

אורין = הדין, these: Schw. M.

אוכמומית, blackness: Schw. N, R.

אחמה, divine name: Ronz., line 4.

אלבלה. Cf. אבלות.

אלפת, from the root אלף 'to teach': Schw. Q.

אמלתיל, name of an angel: Schw. M.

אקמו, (?) brown: Ronz. line 16.

אשוה, equals: Schw. O.

אתבתאנא, resides in the Tana (spirit): Schw. O.

אתואב, may he be forsaken: Schw. L.

בדיד, spade: Schw. M, note 4.

בהמנרוך, proper name, daughter of Tata: Hark., line 3.

בכל, to cry: Lacan, Schw. P.

במהוהר, soon: Ronz., lines 10, 11.

בנריל, separated: Schw. M.

ברונקא = פרונקא, forerunner: *ibid.*

ברסדינא, proper name: Hyvernat.

גיות, body: Schw. R.

גינא, shining weapon: Hyver.

גיתועבים, (?) valley of the impious: Schw. O.

רבה, to be able: Schw. Q.

רפתאיכתאר, may he be anathematized: Schw. M.

הואשט, (?) : Schw. P.

הססא, poison: Schw. Q.

והריסכתא, proper name: Schw. M.

זיח (from the root זיח) to depart: Pozzi.

זורן, audacious: Lacan.

זון אור, proper name: Hark., line 1.

זינהון, their arms: *ibid.*, line 7.

חדאכון, one of you: Pozzi.

חטמותאן: sins: Schw. R.

חמין, heat: Schw. F.

חפשיה, proper name: Ronz., line 21.

חצמצתין, (?) : Lacan,



- חתאיאנוש (?): Schw. R.  
 החמיאל, name of an angel: Hark., line 6.  
 טוטא, proper name: Hark., line 2. Cf. טאטי in Montgomery.  
 טוטרון, this invocation, *or* sound of a horn: Pozzi.  
 טלם, טלנית, shadow, shady: Ronz., lines 6 and 15.  
 טתה (for תחתא), at the bottom: Schw. M.  
 ירוד, dragon: Lacan.  
 כרסי, throne: *ibid.*  
 לאצל, for the deliverance: Pozzi.  
 מאותיפא, obscure: Ronz., line 25.  
 מבליחאת, pernicious: Schw. M.  
 מדים, thing: Pozzi. מידעם, thing: Hyver.  
 מהומן, credible: *ibid.*  
 מוסוי, cure: Schw. R.  
 מוצינן = בוצינן, light: Schw. P.  
 מחיא, stamp: Schw. P.; Hark., line 4.  
 מלדיגדומנר, proper name, Maldigdjudrugmada, or Mor Ge-daymbada: Hark., line 2.  
 מעיק, oppressor: Schw. R.  
 מרוין, race: Ronz., line 9.  
 מראור, bitter: Schw. L.  
 משרקא = שרנא, light: Schw. P.  
 נער, to reject: Ronz., lines 14, 15.  
 סהרין, circles: Hark., line 6.  
 סוג, sort: Schw. R.  
 סלניתי = σελήνη, moon: Schw. P.  
 עט, stylus, ray: Ronz., line 20.  
 עיסרא, prince: Hyver.  
 עכבין, hindrance: Lacan.  
 ערכות, celestial sojourns: Ronz., line 24.  
 ערדיה, disperse, scatter: Pozzi.  
 פנא, proper name: *ibid.*  
 פפי, demon: Schw. M.  
 צמית, always: Lacan.  
 קיומתא, proper name, mother of two sons and one daughter:  
 Hark., 1, 2, 3.

- קסו = קצו, confines : Pozzi.  
 קציר, sick : *ibid.*  
 רבותא, proper noun : *ibid.*  
 רגושה, feeling : *ibid.*  
 רישונדון, proper name : Schw. M.  
 רעי, pasturage : Hyver.  
 רעשהו, to cause to tremble : Ronz., line 10.  
 שודר, backbone, spine : Pozzi.  
 שישו, proper name : Schw. P.  
 שפך, to pour : Schw. R.  
 שרקא, light : Schw. P. Cp. משרקא.  
 שתר, rise, stand erect : Lacan.  
 תאיושו. See חתאיושו.  
 תמאמא, complete : Schw. P.  
 תמלפין, from the root אלף. See this word.  
 תרפעין, v. תתרוכים—רפע, v. רחם.

The historical conclusions in Montgomery's work do not determine precisely the date of these texts. The period that we should assign to them extends over more than four or five centuries, from the fourth to the ninth of the common era. Our argument for the antiquity of the bowls, brought from Suziana to the Musée Parisien of the Louvre by Mr. and Mrs. Dieulafoy, has been set forth in the *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* (ii, 136-8), considering the neighbourhood of the bowls, as well as other objects discovered by the same explorers, the date of which they do not regard as doubtful to them. Nöldeke,<sup>15</sup> on the contrary, basing his opinion upon the presence of Persian names, says that the text written upon the bowl of the Lycklama a Nijeholt's Museum, in the town hall of Cannes, published, translated, and interpreted by Professor Hyvernat, cannot date back later than the eighth century. Our modest view is that such arguments are not peremptory; proper names can date back still later, inasmuch as they have been transmitted during many generations, while the form of the letters is an indication complying more with the time, more often flexible and variable, more

<sup>15</sup> *Zeitschrift für Keilschriftforschung*, II, 295.

exactly revealing the century during which a text has been written. Of calligraphy there can be no question, as it was impossible with the curved lines, and it would be unjust not to take into consideration the material difficulties imposed upon the scribe by the arrangement of the bowls. This then in its very aspect is a proof of ingenuousness, worthy of attention, for the profit of future Aramaic studies.

### RADIN'S 'JEWS AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS'

*The Jews among the Greeks and Romans.* By MAX RADIN.  
Philadelphia: THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF  
AMERICA, 1915. pp. 422 and 7 illustrations.

The civilization of humanity was not begun by the Greeks and Romans alone; in the course of advancement the Jews likewise were an equally important factor. The contact among these three nations has furthered progress even to this day. To what period does this contact go back? What is the nature thereof? To these weighty questions the book of Mr. Radin is a direct reply. He informs us fully concerning the life of the Jews, their material activity, as well as their religious ideal, during the many centuries that elapsed from the captivity of Babylon to the fall of the ancient world. He depicts the state of our ancestors outside of Palestine, and, in order to give us a good understanding of their situation in the midst of surrounding peoples, the author shows us what ideas prevailed at that time in the political and religious world. To this end the book, which contains a storehouse of knowledge, gives full scope in a number of chapters.

During this turbulent period the first relations between the diverse races had been pacific rather than hostile, as we have had occasion to point out elsewhere. Through the invasion of Asia by Hellenism as a result of the victorious armies of Alexander the Great, Greek became in a few years the universal language. Even the Jews, in spite of their inclination to remain distinct,